

CSS | ISSUE BRIEF

TERROR AND IDENTITY

Countering Illegal Bangladeshi Migration

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INTRODUCTION

Migration has been key to human history. The map of the modern world is a result of it. Some of the earliest migrations were from the Caucasus – considered the cradle of human life – to surrounding areas in Europe and Mesopotamia. The Germanic and Slavic people populated much of Europe. Several other Caucasians (Indo-Aryans) would migrate eastward into the Indian subcontinent, meeting up with those of differing descent, such as the Mongoloids and the Dravidians. Some Caucasian groups also ventured into Africa, meeting with Negroid races. From the interactions between the different races, new communities and social groupings were established. A vast majority of migrants travelled long and far intending to find a new home, new opportunities – to improve on their lives and sustain their families. Soon, tribes and other sects would mature as concepts that would increase the bond shared by these now common people. At this point, migration cannot yet be distinguished as being internal or external, given the faint idea of state systems and structures. With the gradual course of time and advancement of human history, however, the idea of a nation of people would develop. With the coming of the nation-state and the beginning of modern history, these people would come together to establish their countries and set forth the rule of law which would govern over them.

Migration has therefore been the core feature defining today's world. It continues to remain a much-discussed phenomenon, being seen and debated upon from a variety of perspectives. The modern world has witnessed the maturity of governance and the establishment of both domestic and international institutions that look over several issues and phenomena, including migration. Nation-states and their governments have inherited the right of controlling migration within their areas of jurisdiction, to keep in check any threats to sovereignty that may arise. While migration built the world up as it is today, it has also, rightfully so, become a threat to states.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In India, it is believed that for each illegal immigrant caught by security personnel and authorities, four others illegally enter the country. Since the birth of the Republic, India has been facing constant and unbattered waves of migrants attempting to enter the country illegally. The partition of the subcontinent at the hands of the British Raj led to over 14 million people

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fleeing from either side of the newly drawn up borders, in the East and the West. While it was split into two independent countries (not counting the several then princely states), India shared borders with Pakistan in the West, but also in the East (Bangladesh). Several border disputes arose with the end of the British Raj, leading to the establishment and subsequent failures of several bilateral attempts at border dispute resolution programmes. Both regions under the Islamic Republic of Pakistani banner proclaimed themselves as the true home and protectorates of the Islamic people of the subcontinent. However, the non-Islamic populations were faced with severe persecution, forcing them to abandon their homes and endure long and painful journeys in search of a new home and life in the latter emerging, secular, Republic of India.

In the years that would follow, it would turn out that Islamabad, while standing tall head to toe preaching for the Islamic people of the world, would engage in sectarian rule and violence, disallowing any Bangla participation in its politics – regional or national. The Pakistani Army which enjoyed absolute authority in the then East Pakistan – as it does to this day in the West – engaged in political and sectarian violence, including rape and genocide, en masse. In the early stages, the mass migration of Bangladeshis to India to escape Pakistani persecution was welcomed with open hands by the political class – indecisive on the impact it could bring about. However, once the dire situation caused by the illegal immigration on the ground was realised, the political class of India under PM Indira Gandhi began to take steps towards countering it.

The persecution of the Hindu Bangla population in East Pakistan fuelled communal tensions in West Bengal, leading to several protests and violent clashes among the Hindu and Muslim communities. In the Northeast, specifically in Assam and Tripura, the increasingly overwhelming influx of refugees intensified the simmering tensions against the Bangla migrants among the local population. Post India's decision to intervene in the Liberation War that led to the birth of Bangladesh as a young, sovereign, nation-state, a further influx of approximately 12 million refugees illegally entered India, into the states of the Northeast and West Bengal. However, this number is bound to be much larger after including the illegal Bangladeshi population residing in other parts of India¹. While metropolitans such as Delhi and Mumbai make use of the cheap labour provided by the illegals for low-income jobs, certain areas in the Northeast and West Bengal now see illegals and their kin as landowners and businessmen.

THE ASSAM ACCORD

In the late 1970s, during the inflowing surge of illegal immigrants, the All-Assam Students Union took to the limelight after protesting against and agitating the unchecked and

¹ Kumar, A. (2010). Illegal Bangladeshi Migration to India: Impact on Internal Security. Strategic Analysis, 35(1), 106-119. doi:10.1080/09700161.2011.530988

uncontrolled inflow of illegal immigrants from across the border. Taking this into serious observation, the government in New Delhi decided to draw a line amidst the crisis which was damaging the status quo in the already volatile Northeast.

The Assam Accord of 1985 was drawn up and signed on August 15th, 1985, by representatives of the Union of India and the Government of Assam, with the All Assam Students Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad. The accord signed between the Government and civilian bodies finalised on setting certain terms as concrete. Any illegals that entered India post-March 24th, 1971, would be detected and treated as non-nationals, under the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order 1964. Those who entered before January 1st, 1966, including those amongst them whose name appeared on the electoral rolls used in 1967 elections, were disenfranchised for 10 years after which they were to be given citizenship².

These efforts were made in a bid to engage and enforce constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people, which had come under threat from the massive inflow of immigrants into the state.

DEMOGRAPHIC THREAT

The demographics of a nation-state are one of the most critical factors that determine the outcome of policymaking, economy, national identity and strategic thought culture, among many others. Throughout history, demographics have played a defining role in the rise and fall of great powers, while driving major changes in economic and living conditions around the world³. While the entire region of South Asia is already faced with the threat of rapidly increasing population figures, unchecked migration from one part of the region to another only increases the burden borne by local governments and communities to support outsiders. Unlike the Marxist vision of a prosperous utopia, the real world – and in this case the developing world – can only support so much of its population, given the limited availability and distribution of resources.

² Implementation of Assam Accord, Government of Assam. (2019, October 31). The Assam Accord. Retrieved from Implementation of Assam Accord, Government of Assam: <https://assamaccord.assam.gov.in/portlets/the-assam-accord>

³ International Strategic Analysis. (2018, August 13). The World's Six Most Dangerous Demographic Threats. Retrieved from International Strategic Analysis: https://www.isa-world.com/news/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=432&cHash=19616151ecd59804803ee2bbb61fb517

Assam has also had the unique distinction of recording some of the highest population growth rates among the 28 states and eight union territories of India. The following table shows the unprecedented population growth seen in Assam since 1971, representative of the unchecked flow and movement of populations across the porous Indo-Bangla international border:

Table 1: Population trends in Assam vis-à-vis India

Year	Population (in Lakh)		Percentage Decadal Variation		Density (Person per sq. km)	
	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India
1971	146	5481	+34.95	+24.80	186	177
1981	180	6833	+23.36	+24.66	230	230
1991	224	8463	+24.24	+23.87	286	267
2001	266	10270	+18.92	+21.54	340	325
2011	312	12102	+17.07	+17.68	397	382

(Source: Census of India, 2011⁴)

A demographic threat arises from such unchecked movements, threatening to imbalance the existing status quo, and bringing with it new ways and behaviours that threaten the everyday lives of native inhabitants. A conflict of identities becomes inevitable when these movements are not properly balanced. In any case of mass migrations – be it in North-eastern India or Sweden, or even the United States – there is a simultaneous rise in local tension and anger against unchecked immigration. In many instances, these migrants that enter illegally generally tend to impose their norms, beliefs and ways on the local population, rather than attempting to blend in and integrate with the pre-existing society. Integration of the immigrants with the host society is an absolute necessity for the migration to be fruitful to both the migrant and the host. Successful integration builds communities that are stronger economically and more inclusive socially and culturally. A divided society ultimately leads down the path of chaos, finding itself at a dysfunctional end, harming all the communities and populations involved, upsetting local harmony and also affecting the local economy.

⁴ Size, Growth Rate and Distribution of Population. (2011). 2011 Census Data. Retrieved from Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India: https://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/india/Final_PPT_2011_chapter3.pdf

THREAT TO INDIAN NATIONAL SECURITY

Before completing his tenure as the Chief of Army Staff, General Bikram Singh in February 2014 was quoted referring to the large-scale illegal migration from Bangladesh as a “grave concern” and a threat to national security⁵. In recent years, the Indian state and its apparatus have grown to understand the importance of synergising the efforts of the security and immigration structures in an integrated manner. In 1998, Lt Gen S K Sinha, the then Governor of the State of Assam wrote in a report to the President of India:

“As a result of population movement from Bangladesh, the spectre looms large of the indigenous people of Assam being reduced to a minority in their home state. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened, and their employment opportunities will be undermined. This silent and invidious demographic invasion of Assam may result in loss of the strategically vital districts of Lower Assam (on the border with Bangladesh). The influx of these illegal migrants is turning these districts into a Muslim majority region. Loss of Lower Assam will sever the entire land mass of the North-East from the rest of India and the rich natural resources of the region will be lost to the nation”⁶.

In the same report, Former Governor Lt Gen S K Sinha goes on to highlight the unfortunate state of affairs regarding the migration situation in the region, remarking that “*after half a century of Independence, we have chosen to remain virtually oblivious to the grave danger to our national security arising from this unabated influx of illegal migrants*” and that “*the prophecy that ... the Assamese people will not find themselves at home in Assam, is well on its way to becoming true as reflected by the present demographic pattern of Assam*”⁷.

Migration to India today takes place for two major reasons: the first being for economic reasons, that is, in search of a better livelihood that migrants are unable to secure for themselves within their home state of Bangladesh. The second reason is for migrants seeking political asylum from their homes, where it is no hidden secret that Bangladesh is increasingly becoming a radicalised state. While Dhaka and the state apparatus attempt their best to suppress the expansion of radical Islam in the densely populated country, foreign funding to Madrassas and

⁵ Tiwary, D. (2014, February 12). Illegal immigration from Bangladesh a threat to national security: Army chief. Retrieved from The Times of India: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Illegal-immigration-from-Bangladesh-a-threat-to-national-security-Army-chief/articleshow/30249244.cms>

⁶ Sinha, S. K. (1998, November 8). Post-1971 Illegal Immigration from Bangladesh: A Demographic Changed Scenario of Assam. Retrieved from Savitribai Phule Pune University: http://www.unipune.ac.in/chairs/St_Sawarkar_Chair/pdf/SK%20Sinha's%20REPORT_24.042020.pdf

⁷ Ibid

other agents operating under the aegis of the Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence is constantly engaged in maligning these efforts, with the ultimate aim of destabilising the Indian Northeast.

The ISI is accused of not only funding and using as proxies Bangladesh-based terror outfits and criminal syndicates, but also Indian domestic non-state actors that have been wreaking havoc in the region since the early 1950s as part of their secessionist movements. The former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, had in 2002 – post the attack on the American cultural centre in Kolkata – linked ISI's⁸ engagement in illegal migration to the Indian state alongside the domestic insurgent group Kamtapur Liberation Army and the United Liberation Front of Assam – both of which are known to conduct cross-border activities along the porous Indo-Bangla international border.

In February 2021, the National Investigation Agency of India concluded investigations into the 2014 Burdwan bomb attack, sentencing the Bangladeshi-origin agent of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh to 29 years in prison. The same terrorist, named Kausar, was also accused of playing a part in the 2018 Bodhgaya attack as well, and of forming a faction of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh in Kolkata, called the New JMB. An Intelligence Bureau agent speaking with media commented:

"Kausar sneaked in and out India several times. He was close to Salahuddin who ran the second faction of the JMB. Kausar's plans to carry out big terror attacks suffered a setback after the IED blew up in Khagragarh, killing two of their own operatives. It is the third faction of the JMB that allegedly masterminded the Holey Artisan Bakery attack in Dhaka in 2016. It is suspected that the faction has links with the Islamic State. Kausar was part of the modules that carried out more than 70 terror attacks in Bangladesh"⁹.

There were also reports of sleeper cells operating in the state of West Bengal under the banner of the New JMB, with the seizure of A large number of IEDs, explosives, hand grenades and training videos. In its charge sheet, the NIA also concluded that the outfit was conspiring to overthrow the Sheikh Hasina administration in Dhaka, which has consistently attempted to maintain decent bilateral ties with New Delhi despite growing local agitation.

⁸ Mitra, S. (2002, February 4). USIS attack: Police still puzzled about motive for attack on American Center in Kolkata. Retrieved from India Today: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/nation/story/20020204-usis-attack-police-still-puzzled-about-motive-for-attack-on-american-center-in-kolkata-796670-2002-02-04>

⁹ Hindustan Times. (2021, February 10). Bangladeshi terrorist gets 29-yr jail term for Khagragarh bomb blast in Bengal. Retrieved from Hindustan Times: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/bangladeshi-terrorist-gets-29-yr-jail-term-for-bomb-blast-in-bengal-s-khagragarh-101612964333228.html>

Reports submitted to the Home Ministry in 2014 also revealed the immoral and corrupted nature of many madrassas in India, most of which were run by Bangladeshi instructors who managed to obtain fraudulent Indian identification. These madrassas were found to be a breeding ground for the indoctrination of radical thought, promoting anti-national or subversive agenda under the garb of religious education. The report claimed that many of the preachers at these Madrassas were affiliated with elements associated with the JMB.

“They digress from the normal religious teachings and 'correct' interpretation of Islam by madrassas having Indian teachers and highlight the alleged atrocities on Indian Muslims through videos and other provocative material. The aim is to exploit the feeling of alienation or disgruntlement among the young impressionable Muslims, with the larger purpose of radicalizing them to take up jihadi terror”¹⁰.

Another Bangladeshi terrorist accused as part of the 2014 Burdwan attack case was a lead trainer at the Simulia madrassa in Burdwan and the Lalgola madrassa in Murshidabad. These madrassas and their trainers have been accused of indoctrinating Indian men and women with violent thoughts and teaching them how to make bombs and improvised explosive devices to carry out attacks¹¹.

In April 2021, two members of the JMB were also arrested in Dhubri district in Assam, with foreign currency worth INR 102,000, and four firearms. They also hold connections with the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam – an organisation whose cadres are filled mostly by Bangladeshi Muslims residing illegally in Assam, as well as the New JMB. These terrorists are very much so a threat to the sovereignty of the Republic of India, but as discussed, are also engaged in the conduct of nefarious activities across the border in Bangladesh. It is in the best interest of both Indian and Bangladeshi governments and security structures to engage in joint information sharing and operations to suppress such elements that constantly attempt to disrupt local stability and the status quo.

In recent years, migration has also gone on to become a major subject of discourse in Indian politics. While several groups open their arms to illegals in India, others vehemently oppose it. Opposition to the migration is based sometimes on ethnic and religious grounds, and while it takes primacy in political settings, the security and stability of the state silently take a larger

¹⁰ The Times of India. (2014, November 12). Bangladeshi instructors indoctrinating young Muslims in madrassas: Study. Retrieved from The Times of India: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Bangladeshi-instructors-indoctrinating-young-Muslims-in-madrassas-Study/articleshow/45126069.cms>

¹¹ Ibid

portion of the issue. The coming of a strong, nationalist government in New Delhi has attempted several times to tackle this threat to Indian security and stability, only to be met with strong opposition and misinformation. The politicisation of this issue by political groups and associations for it to work in their favour, perhaps unintentionally, or even unknowingly, works against the greater interest of the nation and the state.

Dr Pushpita Das of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses raises some interesting remarks regarding the state of affairs in India vis-à-vis the Bangla migration issue. She discusses the issue of politicisation and securitisation of the issue, about how the two overlap one another, remaining in a constant continuum. Every act of securitisation also involves its politicisation. The securitisation and therefore politicisation of an issue does not only revolve around the thought process of the state apparatus and the serving administration but also includes the consideration of public and societal sentiment on the same¹². The idea behind this can be backed up by looking at the deep-rooted involvement of local populations and their sentiment that vehemently protests the presence of illegals in Indian states such as West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura.

While delving into illegal migration in a region such as eastern South Asia, deeply engrossed in transnational criminal operations and syndicates, the issue of fraudulent identification papers and documents cannot, and should not, be overlooked. Many illegal immigrants who enter India without being caught by security forces go on to procure fraudulent documents or arrive with them. Ever so often, document forgery rackets are busted in India's metropolitans, as well as the holders of their illicit product pan the countryside. In March 2021, an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh was arrested by the local police near Roorkee, Uttarakhand. He was arrested for the possession of a fake Aadhar card. The accused was said to have been residing illegally in several parts of India for over 30 years and was charged under several sections of the Indian Penal Code, as well as the Passport Act and Foreigners Act¹³.

Illegal immigrants under the guise of being Indian – through their forged documents – usurp the benefits provided to Indian citizens. A vast majority of illegal immigrants in India, coming from Bangladesh, belong to the lower economic strata and thus depend upon benefits provided by local governments, such as subsidised ration and healthcare, among others. This is a gross violation of Indian sovereignty leading to the wasteful expenditure of Indian taxpayers' money. The arrest of even a single illegal immigrant could save the nation's treasury a fortune which

¹² Das, P. (2016). *Illegal Migration from Bangladesh: Deportation, Border Fences and Work Permits*. New Delhi: Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

¹³ Susheel, T. (2021, March 07). Bangladesh national living in India on forged documents held from Piran Kaliyar. Retrieved from The Times of India: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/bangladesh-national-living-in-india-on-forged-documents-held-from-piran-kaliyar/articleshow/81369325.cms>

is entitled to the nation's own citizenry, for which the government functions. The government must continue the path of detaining illegal immigrants across the country but must also look into criminal syndicates that enable them.

In December 2020, the Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad busted an illegal immigration racket and arrested eight people, including four Bangladeshi nationals, seizing from their possession several fraudulent identity cards and passports. One of the Bangladeshi nationals arrested in the racket included Mohammed Rafiq Rehmatulla Sayyad, who has been enabling illegal migrants in the country with fraudulent documentation since 2013. In a statement, the ATS said that “in the scrutiny of records, it has been found that he has been involved in providing at least 85 fake Indian identity cards and passports to illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. He used forged documents such as PAN card, Aadhaar card, election card, ration card, electricity bill, rent agreements, School Leaving Certificate, birth certificate, and bank passbooks which are required for processing passports”¹⁴. Such agents play an active role in undermining Indian sovereignty and national security, providing fraudulent documents to illegal immigrants. ‘*Wolves enter the flock disguised as sheep*’, as has been so apparent in the devastating series of terror attacks in Europe, in the background of the unchecked and uncontrollable inflow of migrants from all across the distressed regions of West Asia and North Africa. Nations and their administrations must always keep these recent examples in mind while handling issues as sensitive as illegal migration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having discussed some of the major aspects of the issue justifying stern and staunch actions from both state and central levels of governments and security agencies, some of the moves taken up by other nation-states concerning their border management issues must be taken into observation and perhaps consideration. The Trump administration made some commendable advances in securing the American border along with Mexico.

Policy is crucial while tackling any issue. The Trump administration cancelled old policies that permitted asylum seekers who entered the country to remain in the United States while their application was processed. The former President of the United States rolled back policies that provided undocumented immigrants with any form of welfare for at least the first five years of their stay in the country. Among other policies, at the front and foremost of any border management plan comes the construction of fences and/or walls to prevent and deny direct physical access to violate the nation's borders. President Trump's campaign promise of ‘building the wall’ was not met in all sectors of the border due to massive political opposition,

¹⁴ ANI. (2020, December 15). Illegal Bangladeshi Immigration Racket Busted In Mumbai, 8 Arrested. Retrieved from Business World: <http://www.businessworld.in/article/Illegal-Bangladeshi-immigration-racket-busted-in-Mumbai-8-arrested/15-12-2020-353685/>

but its success was noted in areas where the construction was completed. America has indeed had border fencing. They were, however, not effective, and in many sectors damaged. As such, the construction of a sturdy wall was deemed necessary by the conservative administration.

Border Wall

The India-Bangladesh border also shares a similar character: while it exists, its effectiveness is not that high in preventing illegal crossings by migrants. The adverse climate and topography of the region challenge the permanency of border demarcations and fences. Many a time, unabated erosion by the Brahmaputra and Gangadhar rivers washes away certain tracts of the barbed-wire fencing along the international border. For instance, in 2014, 222 metres of barbed wire fencing in the Golokganj sector was washed away owing to erosion by the Gangadhar river, posing a major threat to the rest of the fencing along the border. The topography in the Dhubri sector makes it more difficult for the Border Security Force to guard. Of the 134 km border it shares with Bangladesh, 44 km is riverine, thereby leaving it open, that is, without any proper fencing. Roads in this area have also seen some serious damage due to rains and flooding, making these borders difficult to man for the deployed security personnel¹⁵. While the banks can be fenced, much of it is at risk of being washed away by the river due to soil erosion as well as heavy rains.

Therefore, mere barbed-wire fencing is not a permanent solution. Sometimes, criminals and illegal migrants damage the fencing while attempting to cross over illegally. As it stands, the barbed-wire fence is not an effective solution. It cannot even be called a cost-efficient solution given the fact that it needs to be constantly replaced and repaired with new posts and wiring which is so easily damaged. A more permanent solution is required. The Trump administration saw the same problem and decided to go ahead with the construction of a more permanent wall. A better-constructed wall would also be able to withstand the adverse climatic conditions of the region, while also being a greater hurdle to tackle for illegal immigrants. While building a border wall is more expensive than setting up barbed-wire fencing, in the long run, it will prove to be more effective in countering illegal migration, enduring the adverse climate as well as proving to be more cost-efficient concerning its maintenance.

However, even fencing along the international border has been met with criticism, both from Bangladesh and from within India. While it is the responsibility of the government to take into consideration the wills and whims of its citizenry, its responsibility of safeguarding national interests and the greater nation of people takes precedence over the opinions of the few. For those engaged in border protection, the conduct of their duties has been made much easier with

¹⁵ Sharma, B. K. (2014, August 28). Border fences washed away. Retrieved from The Telegraph: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/north-east/border-fences-washed-away/cid/322247>

the fencing. The construction of a border wall will only improve the efficiency and optimality to which the border guards can carry out their duties.

Technological advancement and deployment

In a world as modern as ours, technological advances and breakthroughs are being achieved more often than not. Technology has played a massive role in the improvement of state surveillance capabilities. In the United States, the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement rely on a vast variety of technological assets and equipment – electro-optical cameras, lasers, chemical detectors, X-rays, and other sensors are used to limit the entry of illegal immigrants and the conduct of nefarious cross-border activities. In India, however, things are different. Border security organisations are still largely reliant upon deployed personnel and patrol stations.

While the government is already engaged in the installation of cameras and thermal sensors, it must consider boosting the allocation of resources towards such projects. Surveillance operations must shift to a technology-based solution that ensures effective surveillance, intrusion detection and identification system. The BSF is already engaged in the development of a Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System along the Indo-Pakistani border in the west. Such a platform that improves jointness and synergises technological deployments along the Indo-Bangla border will prove to be a great asset. Improved surveillance capabilities alongside a border wall will greatly improve the illegal migration statistics and thereby help secure national interests and security objectives. As such, the objective of any future border management system must achieve D4R2 objectives, that is – deter, detect, discriminate, delay, respond and recover. *“Based on the functions they perform, the deployed systems will deter any act of forced intrusion/criminal activity by anti-national forces, detect the presence of any unauthorised personnel, and delay the intrusions until the response mechanism is activated and the situation is brought in control. Furthermore, once threat mitigation/incident management is achieved, a recovery mechanism can be initiated for the system and applications to perform post-incident analysis, pattern analysis and vulnerability mapping”*¹⁶.

Considering all aspects of border management as well as modern warfare, the development of Indian drone capabilities is a necessity, to move ahead into the era of modern technology-based security. While foreign acquisitions take place from time to time, the development of the local industry to support such capabilities will prove to be an asset in the future. The DRDO is attempting to increase said capabilities, however, it is lagging behind other countries, such as Turkey. The Rustom UCAV being developed by the DRDO for use by the Indian armed forces

¹⁶ PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2016). Smart border management: An Indian perspective. New Delhi: PricewaterhouseCoopers. Retrieved from <https://www.moneycontrol.com/the-winning-leap/resource/smart-border-management:-an-indian-perspective-september-2016/resources-1195.pdf>

can also play a very important role in guarding India's borders with Bangladesh, improving surveillance in a region thriving with deltas and terrestrially inaccessible terrain.

Technology must also be made use of for civilian administration purposes. Several agencies in the civilian sector of the government must collaborate with security agencies in implementing better means and systems of ensuring the sanctity of Indian identification documents and initiatives. The usage of smart cards takes the civilian administration in the right direction, providing citizens with physical documentation, verifiable by security agencies through the embedded smart chip, giving it a unique identity in a database, thereby verifying its authenticity. While such databases can be hacked, and have been hacked in the past, it increases the costs, resources, time, and efforts involved in the discovery of fraud, which increases costs. An increase in costs demotivates illegal immigrants from procuring such advanced identification documents and thereby leads to a reduction in the performance of such illicit syndicates as well as improves the performance of security agencies while conducting checks.

The incumbent government is on the right path – toward implementing the creation of a National Register of Citizens. The NRC will prove to be one of the most effective measures taken up by any administration in the past while tackling the ever-persistent issue of illegal immigration from Bangladesh. This attempts to list out all genuine citizens of India, distinguishing them from those who entered illegally as well as obtained citizenship and its benefits through illicit means. The NRC has already been implemented in the State of Assam, where it has helped detain, several illegal immigrants inhabiting the state and better defend the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and overall societal autonomy of the region. As mentioned in earlier cases, the NRC will help determine those eligible for benefits from the State and Central governments of India. While the country's broken opposition continues on its path of irrational opposition in furtherance of their political objectives, the implementation of such an act is an absolute necessity in combatting said issue and must move ahead with the development of means to enact it in all parts of the country. This move by the government, however, was delayed indefinitely due to the outbreak of the Wuhan virus pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Again, like the United States, India must further motivate Bangladeshi cooperation and collaboration in the field of border management and tackling illegal migration. President Trump urged Latin American countries to actively engage in tackling the migration crisis in their own countries. America-friendly countries such as Guatemala and Honduras cooperated given their close ties with Washington. Mexico, which has always had a bitter-sweet relation with the United States, had deployed over 27,000 of its own National Guard troops to control the illegal migrant trails heading north towards the American border. This greatly improved statistics, with some of the lowest migration rates in recent history. While the Americans

engaged in coercive diplomacy, threatening the severing of economic stimulus and deals to the countries, India cannot afford to tread the same path. Bangladesh is under the Chinese radar and any negative move coming from New Delhi could prompt Dhaka to move closer to Beijing.

Migration involves both push and pull factors. Citizens are pushed away from their homes due to bad living conditions and threats to their well-being, while being pulled toward attractive economic offerings and stability, securing the well-being of themselves and their families. India must look into improving its economic presence in Bangladesh and offer more economic packages to the densely populated country. This both improves the livelihoods of local inhabitants, reducing their need to migrate, as well as improves the standing image of New Delhi in the country, reducing radicalisation against the Indian state.

At the same time, the government and security practitioners must take into consideration the current scenario that is prevalent in Bangladesh. During PM Modi's visit to the country late in March 2021, radical Islamist groups brought the country down in a rage of violence. Several Hindu temples and were vandalised and set on fire. Even the members of the press came under attack, while protestors chanted violent and hateful slogans. Roads were blocked and several parts of the country were put under lockdown. Livelihoods came to a halt. Persecution of minorities is not a recent phenomenon, but the increasing radicalisation of the Bangladeshi population is growing to become more apparent. This also represents the increasing presence and prominence of terror outfits in the country engaging in the radicalisation of the youth, that act as a clear standing threat to both India and its porous-border neighbour Bangladesh.

Keeping this in mind, the Government of India and its many security agencies must make wise decisions that ensure the security of the state as well as the safety of its people, against the threat of unchecked migration from Bangladesh. The way India treats illegal migrants today is the message it sends to the illegal migrants of tomorrow.